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# Security Council

Fifty-ninth year

*Provisional*

**4973**rd meeting

Thursday, 20 May 2004, 10 a.m.

New York

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| *President:* | Mr. Akram | (Pakistan) |
| *Members:* | Algeria | Mr. Benmehidi |
| | Angola | Mr. Gaspar Martins |
| | Benin | Mr. Adechi |
| | Brazil | Mr. Sardenberg |
| | Chile | Mr. Muñoz |
| | China | Mr. Cheng Jingye |
| | France | Mrs. D'Achon |
| | Germany | Mr. Pleuger |
| | Philippines | Mr. Mercado |
| | Romania | Mr. Motoc |
| | Russian Federation | Mr. Karev |
| | Spain | Mr. Yañez-Barnuevo |
| | United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland | Mr. Lake |
| | United States of America | Mr. Holliday |

## Agenda

Briefing by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

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04-35739 (E)

*The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.*

**Adoption of the agenda**

*The agenda was adopted.*

**Briefing by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees**

**The President:** In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, and in the absence of objection, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Ruud Lubbers, High Commissioner for Refugees.

It is so decided.

I invite Mr. Ruud Lubbers to take a seat at the Council table.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Security Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

At this meeting, the Security Council will hear a briefing by Mr. Ruud Lubbers, High Commissioner for Refugees.

I now give him the floor.

**Mr. Lubbers:** Mr. President, let me thank you for this opportunity to brief the Security Council. It has been over two years since I have had the occasion to do so. While taking this opportunity to update the Council on a number of humanitarian crises, I will also address two main themes. First, I will underscore the link between forcible displacement and international peace and security. Secondly, I will address the issue of the sustainable return of displaced populations and its positive impact on the creation of durable peace and stability.

Allow me first to focus on displacement and on the implications for peace and security. Wherever there is displacement, there are movements across borders. Therefore, by definition, conflicts that generate refugee movements necessarily involve neighbouring States and thus have regional security implications. As we have seen most vividly in the Great Lakes region in the 1990s and more recently in West Africa, the lines of conflict frequently run across State boundaries due to the various ethnic and cultural ties among the affected communities.

This also leads to mixed movements of populations, including not only refugees but also armed elements seeking sanctuary in neighbouring countries. The presence of armed elements in refugee camps and settlements has a number of grave consequences for the security and welfare of refugees, including possible military incursions, forced recruitment and sexual abuse. Those factors create an unstable and insecure operating environment for humanitarian workers. In addition, the presence of armed elements gives rise to security concerns for host communities and receiving States and has an impact on regional peace and security.

I remember vividly my first visit to West Africa in February 2001, shortly after being appointed High Commissioner. At the time, there were Revolutionary United Front (RUF) incursions into refugee-populated areas in Guinea from Sierra Leone, and armed rebels from Liberia were also circulating among the refugee camps — some of which we had no access to at the time. During that visit I called on the RUF and on Charles Taylor for access to, and the secure passage of, refugees. Despite the subsequent stabilization efforts in the region, we are still suffering today from cross-border armed movements in West Africa, with its many refugee camps. The Mano River region, with its cross-border movements of armed elements and of arms, has now expanded to include Côte d'Ivoire.

A current example which concerns me greatly involves parts of Sudan and the spillover effect on Chad. In southern Sudan, positive developments in the peace talks have given rise to hopes for the return of 600,000 Sudanese refugees currently in exile in neighbouring countries. Yet those developments are increasingly overshadowed by the situation in Darfur. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) took part in the high-level United Nations mission to Darfur, which was headed by my colleague Jim Morris from the World Food Programme. As members are aware from his briefing to the Council, it is estimated that at least one million people have been displaced as a direct result of violence and have suffered gross human rights violations.

Currently my Office is working together with partners to assist the affected population in Darfur and to try to create the conditions for eventual return, but we must have access. If the situation does not improve, we will see further refugee flows into Chad. The international aid community may be quickly overwhelmed, and there is the potential for destabilization of the subregion.

The humanitarian situation is appalling on both sides of the border. I visited Chad in March. Since then, I have received more and more news regarding the presence of armed elements near the border areas inside Chad. There are now strong indications that both Janjaweed militias and various groups associated with the Sudanese rebels are operating in those locations. In view of the increasing insecurity in the border areas, where tens of thousands of refugees remain scattered and without effective access to humanitarian assistance, my Office has been working tirelessly to move the population further inside Chad to safer areas. Despite the massive logistical constraints, more than 60,000 refugees have already been relocated. While there is, of course, no absolute guarantee that armed elements will not reach the new campsites, and it is possible that, even at a distance, they may serve as a resting ground for combatants, distance does make the camps less accessible for the staging of active cross-border military operations. Despite the terrible situation in Chad, I am sad to report that, unfortunately, in a way, the safest place for Darfurians today is in Chad.

Returning to the theme of refugee security, although host Governments are primarily responsible for ensuring the safety of refugee-populated areas, the international community has a responsibility to assist States that lack the capacity and resources to do so themselves. The United Nations can help advocate that host countries assume their responsibilities, and I encourage the Security Council do so in the case of Chad.

That brings me to the subject of peacekeeping. In many countries where UNHCR works, the return and sustainability of refugees and of displaced persons is directly dependent upon peacekeeping. This past Monday, the Council held an open debate on United Nations peacekeeping operations. The Secretary-General spoke about the integration of various elements — including the implementation of peace agreements; the management of political transitions; the return of refugees and internally displaced persons; human rights programmes; and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration — into mission mandates. I fully support his statement. The concept of multidimensional peace operations has worked well in Afghanistan and in Sierra Leone, and I am encouraged to see that it is coming together in Liberia, despite the enormous challenges facing the Mission there.

On that point, however, I would like to make the plea that — given the nature of conflicts today — greater attention be devoted to finding a formula for peacekeeping missions to operate in cross-border conflict situations, where appropriate and where endorsed by the affected Governments. All too often, conflicts become regional, but responses continue to be country-based. Chad is a case in point. Perhaps we have had something of a breakthrough on this in West Africa with respect to cooperation between the various United Nations missions in the region on a number of cross-border issues. That can now be developed into a broader strategy for the future.

The report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations (S/2000/809), led by Mr. Brahimi, states that peacekeepers and peace-builders are inseparable partners. I very much agree with that statement. Jean-Marie Guéhenno, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, and I myself have been putting in place measures that would allow us to better support one another in the common pursuit of helping countries torn by conflict to create conditions for sustainable peace. I very much support his statement last Monday (see S/PV.4970) that peacekeeping operations must draw on the resources and expertise of the whole United Nations system.

Thanks to the Security Council, important language has been incorporated into a number of recent peacekeeping mission mandates that recognizes the importance of engaging peacekeepers in monitoring the physical safety of displaced populations and of returning refugees. Following the political unrest that has plagued Côte d'Ivoire since September 2002, I have been very concerned about the fate of the Liberian refugees who have been caught up in the conflict there. I was therefore particularly pleased when the Security Council tasked the United Nations Mission in Côte d'Ivoire with monitoring the situation of the Liberian refugees to help ensure their safety. I trust that the Council will consider a similar monitoring role related to returns for the expected

United Nations missions in Burundi, Sudan or elsewhere, as deemed appropriate.

I would also like to inform the Council that my Office has begun to support the various United Nations endeavours on disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR). We recognize that, while no one United Nations body has a specific mandate for combatants, it is in everyone's interest to come together to ensure the success of DDR. In many cases, there is a link between combatants and the family members who are in our refugee camps. Thus, my Office can support DDR efforts by ensuring the protection of the families of combatants, linking up with other actors such as the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) on family reunification, and including demobilized combatants in community-based reintegration programmes. For example, my Office has been supporting the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) with DDR efforts in the Democratic Republic of the Congo by ensuring the safe repatriation of family members of combatants and monitoring their return and reintegration.

In West Africa, I have been advocating for a regional approach to DDR, in cooperation with the United Nations missions in the region, the Mano River Union countries — plus Côte d'Ivoire these days — and the Economic Community of West African State (ECOWAS). The conference of Mano River heads of State, which should be taking place today, will provide a good opportunity to raise this issue again.

I just returned from a visit to the region and was pleased to see the efforts my Office in Liberia has made to support DDR efforts there. We are working on this issue as part of a coalition of actors, including the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and UNICEF, under the umbrella of the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL). However, I was disturbed to receive reports on Tuesday of riots in Monrovia related to DDR. Last year I called for Charles Taylor to step down and urged that an international peacekeeping force should fill the security vacuum. We have made a lot of progress since then, but disarmament and demobilization are still a challenge and can be successful only if the necessary resources for reintegration are made available from the beginning. It is the only method to ensure prevention of the recurrence of conflict in the region.

By incorporating concepts such as DDR into the work of my Office, as I have explained just now, we can create the conditions necessary for the return of displaced populations, while also making a major contribution to the building of confidence, stabilization and a climate of peace.

One other endeavour in terms of our cooperation with United Nations missions and support for the broader political process, which is worth mentioning here, is that of Western Sahara. As members know, we have put in place a package of confidence-building measures that has helped defuse tensions in the area. A recent breakthrough has been the family exchange visits. More than 400 people have had the opportunity to visit their long-lost relatives, and thousands more are waiting in line to do so. The operation would not be possible without the excellent cooperation of all parties involved and, especially, of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO). I am hopeful that this may gradually lay the groundwork for political negotiations to finally resolve this long-standing dispute.

Let me now turn to the second theme on which I want to focus: returns and their impact on peace and security. We have already established that population movements across borders have clear peace and security implications. But what are the peace and security implications if populations cannot return to their homes or if they do so without the capacity of the collapsed State to absorb them? In fact, the popular notion of a post-conflict situation is in many senses somewhat misleading. Countries where internal armed conflicts have come to an end are frequently characterized by deep social division, chronic political instability, damaged infrastructure, high unemployment and trauma. As a result, they remain dangerously perched between the prospect for continued peace and the danger of a return to war.

UNHCR's experience is that the longer refugees and internally displaced persons are forced to stay away from their homes, the more embittered they become. In most cases where there are refugee movements, displacement is either forced or coerced in some manner. And even if displacement was not the original intention of the conflict, it sometimes becomes an overriding factor and, indeed, further exacerbates the conflict. As time goes on, the camps and the settlements where refugees find temporary shelter may become breeding grounds for despair, and the refugees

themselves may become more vulnerable to political and military manipulation. In such cases, the prolongation of displacement can itself become an obstacle to peace and to the achievement of lasting solutions to conflict. Yet, despite that, political negotiations often fail to address the grievances of populations that have been forced from their homes, which can in turn hinder the success of the peace process.

The critical factor is to determine the conditions for the safe and the sustainable return of refugees to their homes. Peacekeeping alone cannot sustain peace; it can only create the space in which peace may be built. There is the transition from war to peace, but also the transition from a breakdown in State institutions to the rule of law. We often talk about the differences between internally displaced persons and refugees who have crossed an international border, but the border itself is not the issue. In fact, the defining characteristic of both is the lack of State protection, because the State is either unable or unwilling to provide it. Therefore, in the transition from war to peace, it is critical that the protection and the rights of all groups within the State, including those who fled during the violence, are guaranteed in the peace agreement. That is also essential for reconciliation.

Although my mandate is refugees, I have also come to be known as the "High Commissioner for Returnees". Since I was appointed High Commissioner in January 2001, I have been focused on finding durable solutions for refugees. The problem is that, in post-conflict situations, the return of large numbers of refugees and internally displaced persons needs a balanced and integrated approach to make returns durable and part of sustainable peace-building. War-torn communities, which often suffer just as much as, or more than, refugees, cannot be expected to absorb large numbers of returnees without an immediate improvement in their capacity to meet basic needs. This is the critical period when international development agencies need to make the investment in reconstruction and reintegration programmes. It is not only about repatriation. In areas of return, local communities as well as returning refugees and internally displaced persons deserve integration and rehabilitation projects.

These programmes need to be incorporated systematically into post-conflict relief efforts; planning should in fact begin at the outset of any emergency. With this in mind, UNHCR became a member of the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) with the aim of ensuring that refugees and returnees are included in the formulation of post-conflict policies as well as longer-term development programmes. I have also personally launched a number of initiatives to try to address this issue, working in partnership with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the World Food Programme (WFP), other United Nations agencies, the World Bank and bilateral development partners. One such initiative, called the "four Rs", helps to connect the transitions between repatriation, reintegration, rehabilitation and reconstruction. In doing so, we also practice reconciliation: it is about return and reconciliation. We are now building on the success of pilot projects in Afghanistan, Sierra Leone and Sri Lanka, and we hope to implement similar initiatives in Liberia, Burundi and, eventually, in the Sudan. I mentioned disarmament earlier. However, it is worth noting here the importance of also incorporating ex-combatants who have been demobilized into reintegration programmes.

Under the theme of returns, I would now like to provide some encouraging news regarding Africa. I am pleased to report that never before have there been so many opportunities for durable solutions in so many parts of Africa. There is enormous potential for resolving long-standing conflicts, consolidating peace and putting an end to long-standing refugee and internally displaced persons situations. In Eritrea, Angola and Rwanda, hundreds of thousands of refugees have gone home over the past few years. In Sierra Leone alone, more than 240,000 refugees have been able to return home thanks to the presence of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) and the broader stabilization efforts of the international community. We hope to complete the Sierra Leone repatriation during the course of this year. In Liberia, we have a long way to go, but we hope to begin repatriation for the more than 320,000 refugees who fled the country, as well as for hundreds of thousands of internally displaced persons — we are now involved in 20 camps for internally displaced persons — once the situation further stabilizes. I think this will be possible as from October. In Burundi, progress on the political front has enabled UNHCR to facilitate the repatriation of 35,000 refugees since the beginning of this year, and many more will follow.

We have a common responsibility to reduce the risk of conflicts recurring and to ensure that this progress continues. The opportunities are there, but the question is, will we seize them? Many challenges lie ahead: peace processes must be strongly supported at all levels; efforts must be made to ensure the effectiveness of programmes aimed at the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of former combatants, including youths; comprehensive strategies should be developed to support peace-building and reconciliation efforts; humanitarian agencies must be given adequate resources to help refugees and internally displaced persons return home in safety and dignity; and the social and economic aspects of post-conflict reconstruction must be addressed in a timely and coordinated way. There will be no peace and development in Africa without reintegrating uprooted people and making them productive once again.

Here I would like to raise concerns about inequity in the resources that are committed to Africa. While our emergency teams struggle to move tens of thousands of refugees from the border areas in Chad, this life-saving operation and the operation to prepare the ground for eventual repatriation to the Sudan remain seriously under-funded. Our operations in Liberia also face severe shortages. I realize that the Council is not seized of funding issues. However, this is also a political point, and one that needs to be addressed if we are to end the hostilities in the Sudan and sustain the peace process in Liberia. Surely the pledges for Liberia at the donors conference here in New York earlier this year were generous. But pledges have to be translated into effective funding and into concrete action.

I would like to turn now to another part of the world. In Afghanistan, the situation has begun to improve since the end of 2001, and more than 3 million refugees and internally displaced Afghans have returned to their homes. My Office is actively working with the Governments of Iran and Pakistan to facilitate the return of 1 million more this year. I would like to add here that Iran and Pakistan have shouldered a great burden in hosting Afghan refugees for more than 25 years. Their generosity and their observance of international protection and asylum principles must be recognized as an example for other nations. It is a special pleasure for me to make that observation at the very time that Pakistan is presiding over the Council. Thank you so much, Mr. President.

Despite the progress that has been made on returns so far, it is estimated that there are still around 3 million Afghans remaining in both Iran and Pakistan. In the tribal areas of Pakistan neighbouring Afghanistan, there are about 200,000 refugees. I recently had the opportunity to return to the region, during the month of April. During that time, I ensured that my Office was focused more than ever on the repatriation effort. In particular, we will aim to accelerate the closure of the refugee camps in the border areas in order to help alleviate the security liability for Pakistan and for the international community at large.

That being said, the lack of security inside Afghanistan is clearly one of the key factors preventing or discouraging the return of Afghans. This is particularly evident in areas where factional fighting continues to create a negative climate for resolving displacement. Disregard for the rule of law and other factors such as forced recruitment, illegal taxation and house and land occupation also prevent returns from taking place. These problems must be addressed with high priority. When I visited the region in April, I met with refugees and internally displaced persons to discuss their prospects for return. When asked what would enable them to go home, the overriding response was the deployment of international troops to their areas of origin.

I am aware of the plans of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) to expand the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) to a number of locations, including through the establishment of more Provincial Reconstruction Teams — which actually should be provincial stabilization teams. I welcome those plans. However, I recently wrote to the Secretary General of NATO to express concern about the modest troop pledges made at the Berlin Conference and about the slow pace of the expansion. ISAF expansion is of crucial importance to the successful completion of the Bonn process. It is also a key issue for the return of refugees and displaced persons — particularly leading up to elections.

For our part, my Office supported the Government in the establishment of a Return Commission — including the participation of both the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan

(UNAMA) and UNHCR — to address the issue of returns of internally displaced persons, specifically Pashtuns to the north. The Commission is working actively with the local leaders in the north in order to try to prevent any further displacement and to create conditions for sustainable returns to take place. But again, we need the Council's support on the security issue and the expansion of ISAF, along with the Provincial Teams, in order to succeed.

I cannot conclude without mentioning my concern about the situation in Iraq, an issue that also continues to preoccupy the Security Council. As members are aware, the war in Iraq caused no massive refugee movements. But the power vacuum and the unremitting turmoil have led to the collapse of public services and to insecurity for the majority of Iraqis. Although opportunities remain bleak for refugees to return home to a situation of instability, my Office is working to help those Iraqi refugees in Iran who are interested in repatriation to return home. Repatriation convoys, many of them to Basra, started last November. Although operations were halted in April owing to fighting and to security concerns, they were able to resume two weeks ago. Those are cautious, small steps, but I hope that they will contribute in some measure to the future stability of Iraq.

Issues of internal displacement — including in the north, where UNHCR will assist with the return and reintegration of displaced Kurds — are now being addressed through what I call "plan B". Plan B is being carried out only through national staff and non-governmental organizations. I hope to go back, as soon as security permits, to "plan A". Plan A means international staff working in Iraq in order to carry out further humanitarian assistance and reconstruction, to undo the terrible wrongdoings of Saddam Hussein, to assist the victims of the Arabization campaign, to assist the Marsh Arabs and to ensure the rights of the Faili Kurds. We will work with the Iraqi minister for uprooted people — with Iraqis and for Iraqis.

I also praise the efforts of United Nations national staff members for their courage and dedication. Through them, and in cooperation with international and national non-governmental organizations such as Première Urgence, the International Islamic Relief Organization and the Intersos Humanitarian Aid Organization, we have been able to continue lifesaving activities. For example, together we distributed emergency supplies to more than 50,000 people caught in the recent upsurge of violence in central and southern Iraq. But I would like to repeat that they also eagerly look forward to the day when international staff will be able to return to Iraq to complete their mission.

That brings me to a final point, on the security of United Nations staff members. With more than 4,000 UNHCR staff members currently working in the field, often in very remote and dangerous locations, this issue is of particular concern to me and to my Office. The bombing of the United Nations office in Baghdad last August was a tragic reminder of the risks that staff members take in the name of peace and justice. What lessons shall we draw from that? The answer is certainly not what I call Iraqization — by that, I mean the tendency to believe that the whole world is like Iraq. I disagree with the notion that the United Nations should start operating in a radically different way in every country in which it operates, on the basis that it is now a terrorist target everywhere. My Office cannot operate from a fortress: we cannot, and we should not. If it comes to that, we might as well pack up and go home.

As the Council is aware, the Secretary-General has set up a team to look into the issue of staff safety, and efforts are currently under way to improve the security of United Nations personnel around the world. For my part, I am determined to ensure that, whatever changes are made, the system allows for — and indeed encourages — a differentiated country-by-country approach. Security Management Teams established in the field must be empowered to take decisions on the ground that are relevant to the local circumstances. That should not be eroded by the bureaucratization and centralization of our security management system. I support the idea that the highest United Nations official in the country should have the ultimate responsibility for the security of all United Nations staff in that country. In short, "Operate in a secure way" must be our leitmotif. I will stop here, but I ask the Council for its continued support in helping us to ensure the safety of United Nations staff members.

UNHCR's ability to protect refugees and to find durable solutions depends largely on the effectiveness of its partnerships. That includes partnerships with other entities of the United Nations system, international organizations outside the United Nations system such as the International Committee of the Red Cross, regional organizations and initiatives such as the

Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the New Partnership for Africa's Development and, of course, non-governmental organizations. Because of the link between refugees and international peace and security, a strong relationship must exist also between UNHCR and the Security Council.

Today, I outlined a number of initiatives that my Office is taking to work in support of current peacekeeping endeavours. Likewise, the Security Council's influence and its ability to take decisive political action are critical in helping to avert humanitarian catastrophes. It is important that the Security Council continue to provide leadership and direction in bringing together the various domains of the United Nations system, including peacekeeping, peace-building, humanitarian action and even development.

**The President:** I thank Mr. Lubbers for his comprehensive briefing and for the kind words he addressed to my delegation.

As there is no list of speakers, I invite Council members who wish to address questions to the High Commissioner to so indicate to the Secretariat as from now.

**Mr. Sardenberg** (Brazil): I would like to anticipate other colleagues in thanking High Commissioner Ruud Lubbers for his informative briefing on a most important issue. I also wish to offer a few comments and to ask a question.

We are most appreciative of the efforts of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in its dedicated humanitarian work to protect refugees and to find durable solutions for them: repatriation, local reintegration or resettlement. The 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol constitute the bedrock of refugee protection. We strongly support the strict observance by all countries of the principles contained therein.

In this respect, it is to be noted with grave concern that the fundamental provision — the so-called principle of non-refoulement — is not always respected. Voluntary repatriation and reintegration are sometimes not feasible. To make matters more complicated, public perception of refugee problems has been affected worldwide by incidents of trafficking and smuggling of people, as well as by the recurring waves of economic migrants.

It is important that countries adopting more restrictive immigration and anti-terrorist measures continue to keep their borders open to refugees. On the one hand, terrorists must be prevented from gaining admission to countries by illegally abusing their asylum status. Provisions of the Convention shall not apply to people who have committed serious crimes. On the other hand, we fully concur with Mr. Lubbers statement, made the last time he briefed the Council in February 2002, that we cannot allow the global efforts to combat terrorism to weaken the international refugee regime. In other words, counter-terrorism measures cannot hinder the right to seek refuge. Of course, refugees and internally displaced persons are victims of human rights violations and the international community must help them to resume their lives in an environment where their security and dignity are guaranteed.

I would like to invite Mr. Lubbers to expand his comments on the question of the resettlement of refugees at this particular point in time.

**Mr. Muñoz** (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): I, too, should like to thank Mr. Lubbers for his briefing on the serious humanitarian situation of refugees confronting the international community. The briefing was an important one.

As questions are to be asked at this time, I should like to plunge into the heart of the matter and ask about a refugee crisis that is currently under way. Mr. Lubbers mentioned a number of such crises in his briefing, but I wish to refer to that now unfolding in the Sudan as a result of the conflict in Darfur. I should like to ask several questions in this regard.

We know that there are thousands of refugees moving from Darfur into Chad, as Mr. Lubbers described in detail today. First, is there any information on refugees potentially moving from Darfur into the territory of the Central African Republic?

Secondly, what kind of security is being provided by the Government of the Sudan for the Darfur camps? What degree of control does the Government in Khartoum have over the Janjaweed militia?

Thirdly, since the humanitarian ceasefire was signed on 8 April, to what degree has the access of humanitarian agencies to the most severely affected zones improved? In this respect, how are visas and

travel permits being issued by the Government of the Sudan to the various humanitarian agencies?

Fourthly, in the light of the information provided by the press that the Janjaweed militias are assaulting the camps in Chad, what security measures are being provided by the Government of that country to those camps? In this regard, has the United Nations provided those camps with sufficient food? I have read criticism in major newspapers to the effect that, when refugees arrive in these camps, the United Nations has not planned for enough food for the newcomers.

Fifthly, in view of the fact that the rainy season will begin in just a few weeks, does Mr. Lubbers believe that there is sufficient time to address an even larger humanitarian crisis?

**Mr. Gaspar Martins** (Angola): I should like to say that we are very pleased, Sir, that you have included this important topic in your programme, since it is our belief that a briefing by the High Commissioner for Refugees is not only timely, but also necessary if the Security Council is to have a real measure of the importance of the problem of refugees, internally displaced persons and security. This is no longer a simple humanitarian problem; it is a real security problem. I can attest to that, coming from a country which has been affected and where the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees has been playing a very important positive role in assisting my Government in the post-conflict area.

On the other hand, Africa as a whole — as has been reported by the High Commissioner — is a continent where this problem is real. It is a problem that we live with every day in every single region of the continent, be it North Africa, West Africa or southern Africa. This is a problem that needs to be tackled and has to be considered also in conjunction with the security analyses that we make, particularly here in this Chamber.

I would therefore like to thank High Commissioner Lubbers for the very interesting and comprehensive briefing he has presented and for raising some of the main issues that are still confronting the Organization.

I would also like just to raise a couple of questions, since this is the format we have agreed on. First, I should like to hear a further elaboration on the problem of interconnections in the work of coordination with other agencies within and outside the United Nations system. We have the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, the Department of Political Affairs, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS and the United Nations Children's Fund. How can we have a real coordination of these various agencies so that we can deal effectively with the problem? Again, we come back to the fact that this is not just a simple humanitarian question — it is a security problem.

Secondly, I would appreciate some further comments on financial support. I know that this is one of the main bottlenecks in the programmes. I would like to hear from the High Commissioner how his Office intends to tackle some of the challenges that the financial bottlenecks are raising.

**Mrs. D'Achon** (France) (*spoke in French*): I, too, would like to thank Mr. Lubbers for his very comprehensive briefing on the situation of refugees in conflict situations. This is an issue that members of the Council follow very carefully.

In the light of the recent displacements of which Mr. Lubbers spoke, I would like to ask him two sets of questions. The first concerns West Africa. Given that the United Nations now has three peacekeeping operations with robust mandates in the region, can Mr. Lubbers explain how the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) envisions the possible synergy among those three operations, in particular with respect to refugees? Secondly, in the light of the upcoming elections in Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia, could he tell the Council whether the repatriation of refugees and the return of displaced persons are being organized in such a way that those individuals too can participate in the upcoming elections? Specifically, do the UNHCR programmes address the issue of registering those refugees and displaced persons on the voter rolls?

My other two questions concern the situation in Darfur, the Sudan, in particular the problem of the refugees in Chad. France is particularly concerned at the situation in that region. As is known, at the start of this year, France disbursed €200,000 to UNHCR for its action in Chad, in addition to the €150,000 disbursed to the French non-governmental organization cited by Mr. Lubbers, Première Urgence, which also works in Chad.

Because it is difficult to get exact figures on the number of refugees crossing the border right now and because we are dealing with nomadic peoples, I wish to ask Mr. Lubbers whether he has an estimate of the current figures and, in particular, whether he foresees a substantial increase in the flow of refugees into Chad. If such an increase is foreseen, is it sustainable, given the security situation as described by preceding speakers?

**Mr. Motoc** (Romania): I associate myself with many of the general remarks that were made by previous speakers, in particular those by Ambassador Gaspar Martins. I express the great appreciation and gratitude of my delegation to High Commissioner Ruud Lubbers for the very timely and insightful briefing he just gave the Council. I take this opportunity to commend Mr. Lubbers and his team for their overall performance in the discharge of the crucial responsibilities entrusted to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

I would like to direct two questions to the kind attention of Mr. Lubbers. The first is actually a point of clarification with respect to the refugee situation in Darfur, the Sudan. According to our information, the figures that have been presented by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), there were recently reported to be 2 million refugees in connection with that situation. That should be compared to the reported 1 million in April. If those figures are accurate, I would really appreciate a comment on the reasons for the dramatic increase in the number of refugees in that troubled area.

Secondly, I would like to direct attention to an area that was not touched on in the otherwise very comprehensive briefing to the Council — and it might have been, given the worldwide scope of the UNHCR's activities. I would like to ask a question with regard to Kosovo. According to the Secretary-General's report on the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) of 30 April (S/2004/348), UNMIK is working with the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government in supporting the reconstruction effort after the violent events of last March. To that end, UNMIK is reported to have formed a reconstruction support team that includes the UNHCR, the United Nations Development Programme and the European Agency for Reconstruction. We would be very appreciative if the High Commissioner could kindly give the Council an update on the efforts of UNHCR as part of that collective effort, in particular with respect to progress made in the return process for newly displaced persons.

**Mr. Pleuger** (Germany): I too join other delegations in thanking the High Commissioner for his very comprehensive report.

I have one short remark and three short questions. My remark pertains to the relationship between peacekeeping and the return of refugees. The High Commissioner rightly said that the sustainable return of refugees and displaced persons is directly dependent upon peacekeeping. The inverse is also true, too. Peacekeeping and, in particular, peace-building are not possible without the return of refugees and displaced persons. The problem of refugees, of course, is always a cross-border problem, and I agree with the High Commissioner that we have to find a formula for peacekeeping missions to operate in cross-border conflict situations.

Therefore, Germany very much supports the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) programme for the voluntary return of refugees in Africa, and we will continue to support all of its initiatives in that respect. The sustainable reintegration of refugees in Africa is a major concern for my Government. In 2003, Germany's support for UNHCR for projects in Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania and Chad was approximately €7.6 million. This year, we have allocated €4.8 million so far for UNHCR projects in Africa, with a focus on Angola, Somalia and Sierra Leone. I can assure the High Commissioner that we will continue to further support his Office's achievements.

My questions pertain to Darfur and go in the same direction as what my French and Romanian colleagues have already said. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) has given us a number of more than 2 million people that have been affected by the conflict. My question is, how does Mr. Lubbers see the further development in the near future? Are there large numbers of additional refugees crossing the border? And how will UNHCR be able to deal with that situation? Can UNHCR cope with it?

My second question pertains to what the High Commissioner said about the security of United

Nations staff members. I agree that a country-by-country approach should by chosen when assessing the security of staff members and that not everything is like Iraq or any other place of crisis. But the High Commissioner said that Security Management Teams established in the field must be empowered to take decisions on the ground relevant to the local circumstances. That is all right. Then he said that this should not be eroded by the bureaucratization and centralization of our security management system. Perhaps he could elaborate a little bit on what that means, in detail.

My third and last question pertains to integrated missions and the relationship between UNHCR and the military. We share the High Commissioner's view that, in principle, integrated United Nations missions constitute a good approach. The advantage of integration lies in a more efficient allocation of both financial and human resources, and also allows for easier coordination. United Nations peacekeeping missions are increasingly of an integrated nature, with military and aid personnel working hand in hand. In some of those missions, humanitarian assistance is already part of the mandate. In that regard, we would like to draw attention to the 2003 Guidelines on the use of military and civil defence assets (MCDA) to support United Nations humanitarian activities in complex emergencies. Those so-called MCDA Guidelines complement the 1994 Oslo Guidelines for situations in which State control over a country in crisis has collapsed. My Government participated in the drafting of those Guidelines, and, in our view, the following principles contained therein are of particular importance: first, respect for the sovereignty of the State in crisis; secondly, impartiality, meaning that only troops not involved in a conflict can assist humanitarian actions; thirdly, subsidiarity, meaning that humanitarian assistance is, above all, the task of relief organizations and that MCDA should be only a support of last resort; and fourthly, that military assistance for humanitarian relief should be given only on the request, or with the consent, of the target country.

I would like to ask Mr. Lubbers what his assessment is as to the state of implementation of those Guidelines.

**Mr. Mercado** (Philippines): I wish to join other delegations in thanking High Commissioner Lubbers for his comprehensive briefing to the Council on the challenges facing refugees and internally displaced persons, especially as they relate to the peace and security of camps and settlements and internal and cross-border peace and security situations.

I should like to touch on the issue of refugee security. More often than not, refugees live in a constant state of insecurity, with respect to both their personal safety and socio-economic conditions. Refugees and internally displaced persons constitute one of the most vulnerable groups in the world today, because, although they have been resettled to places that offer immediate safe haven, they are nonetheless exposed to many threats to their lives. Moreover, exploitation of the vulnerabilities of refugees can give rise to serious security-related concerns for host States and their immediate neighbours.

The safety of refugees within their camps, for instance, is increasingly becoming a matter of concern. Because of their vulnerability, refugee camps can easily be infiltrated by insurgents and criminal elements that use such camps to harbour them. Since the safety of the refugees is the primary goal, the civilian character of refugee camps should be maintained as much as possible.

However, while it is desirable to separate armed elements from civilian refugee populations, the task of maintaining the civilian character of refugee camps may not be that easy. In some cases, a number of refugees could secretly arm themselves to provide added security for the camp. In other instances, armed groups may be refugee-friendly and act as the protectors of a certain refugee area against other armed aggressors.

The blurred lines between the civilian and military character of camps may expose their population to an increased likelihood of attack by opposing forces. Thus, maintaining the civilian character of refugee camps has become a priority security issue. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has emphasized the need to separate civilians from armed individuals in refugee camps. This, however, may not be easy to accomplish, due to the complex situations I mentioned earlier.

Would UNHCR therefore have recommendations on how to address the different security situations in refugee camps?

**Mr. Rostov** (United States of America): I want to thank High Commissioner Lubbers for his briefing, and I would like to say a few words prior to asking a few questions.

Members may have seen Secretary of State Powell announce, on Tuesday of this week, that the United States was going to contribute an additional $88.3 million, to bring our total contribution to $247 million for refugee support — $44 million of which is targeted for Africa.

I also would like to make the point that I think that we are all not only grateful for the work of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), but also cognizant that it probably has a larger and more important impact on more people than almost any other Office of the United Nations.

The second point I want to make is that we are all, I think, very concerned about the humanitarian situation in and around Darfur and Chad. We are very conscious, as the Government of the Sudan itself is, that there is a very dire situation there. My questions therefore build on the questions colleagues have put forward and are directed to that situation.

We would be interested in obtaining some insight into UNHCR's planned protection role for Darfur. We would be interested in any information about any contingency planning being done by the Office in the event of additional refugee flows into Chad. Finally, following up on a number of questions, we would be interested in what Mr. Lubbers' Office would recommend that the international community provide by way of security to enable refugees to live in a measure of security and for his Office and other humanitarian workers to do that work in a secure fashion.

**Mr. Benmehidi** (Algeria) (*spoke in French*): I would like to join previous speakers in thanking Mr. Lubbers for his comprehensive and exhaustive briefing on the situation of refugee populations throughout the world. I would like to say a few words about the difficulties encountered by the High Commissioner and the humanitarian community in dealing with such populations flows.

Could Mr. Lubbers give us some information on the financial problems caused by these emergency situations? In that connection, I would like to say a few words about the specific situation of refugee-receiving States, which, as is well known, are mostly developing countries. They usually spare no effort in providing hospitality, yet, in most cases, their national development efforts are hampered and their resources absorbed by their duty of hospitality vis-à-vis the refugee populations. In that respect, I am thinking of the problem of cost-sharing. I would like to ask Mr. Lubbers to say a few words about what should probably be done to alleviate the burden on receiving States.

A second point that Mr. Lubbers' briefing prompts me to make relates to the considerable contribution that the Office of the High Commissioner has made towards improving the political climate of those conflicts in which he is involved, with a view to promoting the return of refugees.

I would like to point out that we are dealing with two distinct types of refugees situations: situations that are heavily covered in the media or emergency situations that require the mobilization of resources; and those that we call the forgotten conflicts, which can persist for reasons that, in my view, are worth identifying in a debate such as this — political reasons that can prolong the dependency of populations for decades. My delegation would highly appreciate hearing Mr. Lubbers's comments on forgotten conflicts.

**The President**: I shall now offer some comments and questions in my capacity as the representative of Pakistan.

First of all, I would like to thank High Commissioner Lubbers for having come here to brief us in such a comprehensive way. He has left a lot of food for thought for members of the Council. It is very timely, I think, that his briefing comes after the Council's discussion on the question of peacekeeping on 17 May and before the discussion that we intend to have on 28 May on the issue of complex crises and the United Nations response.

I think what is important to note, perhaps, is that in any crisis, there are two aspects that immediately arise. The first is security and the second is the humanitarian requirements of people. We have a slight dichotomy in the international response. For peacekeeping, once the Council is able to take a decision, we are then able to mobilize the resources required for the deployment of the agreed peacekeeping operations. On the contrary, with regard to humanitarian response, we are dependent, first of all, on voluntary contributions from Governments and

also on the response of the host Governments on the ground with regard to access and cooperation. Would Mr. Lubbers have any thoughts about how one could synchronize the international security and financial responses to calm crisis situations as they arise?

I have two specific questions with regard to Afghanistan. I was very grateful to note Mr. Lubbers's mention of Pakistan as an example of hosting 4 million Afghan refugees over some 25 years. Many of them are still there. In April 2001, Pakistan, Afghanistan and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) signed a tripartite agreement for the voluntary repatriation of Afghan refugees. I would like to ask whether there is any road map or plan drawn up for the implementation of that agreement and, if so, what progress has been achieved in that context.

My last point is that, as the High Commissioner is aware, the Afghan Cabinet of President Karzai is finalizing the electoral law, and it has been agreed in principle that the Afghan refugees in Pakistan and Iran will also participate in the elections. While the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan would be mainly responsible for coordination in that regard, it is our expectation and hope that the High Commissioner's staff, with its experience and its data, will be able to lend its assistance in that process, including by facilitating the registration of Afghan refugees prior to the elections. I would be very grateful to know if the High Commissioner has any information or comments that he would wish to make on this aspect.

I now resume my functions as President of the Security Council.

Mr. Lubbers has a lot of questions to address, and I give him the floor.

**Mr. Lubbers**: Indeed, I apologize at the outset that I shall have to answer a bit in shorthand — very short — when I see how many very relevant questions were put forward. Maybe I will answer in the order of the interventions. I will thus start with the questions and remarks made on behalf of the Government of Brazil.

When one looks at the world at large, the climate — the political situation, if you like — in relation to refugees has become more difficult. As was rightly said, this is also because many countries have to deal with the phenomenon of human traffickers bringing to their borders mixed flows of people: partly refugees, indeed, but partly also migrants for other reasons, who are advised that they might be able to enter countries if they portray themselves as refugees. That has given flows of refugees a bad name, and it is a very serious problem.

That means that, as High Commissioner, I have to invest time and initiatives to reduce what we call irregular flows of people. Now this falls only partly within UNHCR's capacity to improve it. It relates in part to a lack of managed migration. If there were ways to report immigration legally, maybe we would have fewer mixed flows. That is one of the problems.

What we do from our side is take away or at least reduce the need for people to turn to human traffickers by trying from the outset to find better permanent solutions for refugees. There would be much less need for people who must flee to another country to turn to human traffickers if they knew that when they reported to a refugee camp there would be a solution for them, either because, within a reasonable time frame, peace would come to their country so they could return, or because they would be allowed to gradually integrate into the country to which they had fled or would be welcome in country resettlement programmes further abroad. By the way, Brazil is now participating in such a programme.

So, in addition to the point, which was rightly made, that we have to keep intact the obligation not to refoule people and to accept people when they are real refugees, the role of UNHCR here has to broaden to include a new concept to reduce irregular, secondary flows of people by putting in place joint mechanisms for countries to provide solutions: sustainable repatriation, local integration and resettlement. That is possible only if we learn to practice burden-sharing among countries. It simply is not fair to think that the obligations vis-à-vis refugees can be fully fulfilled country by country. I gave the remarkable positive example of Pakistan, and there are certainly others. However, we also know from this experience that, at some point, it simply breaks down: one says, "This is no longer fair, we have to share the burden, we have to do something together".

I turn to the questions posed on behalf of the Government of Chile, about Darfur. These questions were very clear, and I will try to be as specific as Ambassador Muñoz was in asking the questions.

First, do we see outflow from Darfur into the Central African Republic? We still do not, and that is

for geographical reasons. The conflict in Darfur started in the north of Darfur, let us say in the Bahai region. It then spread downwards. We are somewhat concerned that it might spread further, all the way to the area of Darfur bordering the Central African Republic, and then we would certainly see people going there. This is still not the case.

I turn to the question of the relationship of the Government of Sudan to the Darfur crisis. I have learned in my mission as High Commissioner to be a bit more blunt than I would be in normal diplomatic language. I think it is obvious that the effective ceasefire in Sudan provided the potential for the army of Sudan to utilize its spare capacity to start an action in Darfur. This might have been promoted, of course, by rebel movements in Darfur, by movements of people who want autonomy. That is, of course, a broader phenomenon. However, this specific type of action became possible because of the effective ceasefire and the spare capacity. We then saw there what we have seen elsewhere in the world: a joint action of the army working together with the militia. It is the Janjaweed, that are, as it were, a factor in this; one from the air, the others on the ground. The process of cleansing then starts. I say "cleansing" not because it is motivated by ethnic motivations; I think it is motivated more by an effort to break the rebellion and to motivate people to join the Government forces, using the prospect of getting the acreage, the land and the villages. So you move people out with all possible awful systems, which are also practised elsewhere in the world. The Janjaweed does indeed effect incursions into Chad, chasing the same people for their cattle and trying to intimidate them. As members may know, there is an agreement between the two armies — and this is, in a way, remarkable — on the Chadian army's right to go, I believe, 100 kilometres into the territory of the Sudan in Darfur. The army there acknowledges that it does not have the capacity to control this. Now, after what I have said, members may have other thoughts on the subject, but that is happening. You see, therefore, a certain militarization of the situation on both sides of the border.

The third question was about access to Darfur. A multitude of initiatives have been taken by the international community to get access there; it is still very difficult. There have been missions; we know that the Red Cross movement and Doctors without Borders are working there. We have seen missions going there; we have seen Mr. James Morris go there. Then we get assurances that people are allowed to go in, that they have access. They then try to get visas, and, when they arrive, they see that their visa is no longer valid and they need a new visa. It is not very nice. In terms of access, it does not really work, at this moment. That is one of the reasons that UNHCR, although we are very burdened — overburdened, if you like — with the situation in Chad for Darfurians, has nevertheless now offered to go there ourselves, with a few teams, in addition to others who are there in the Darfur area. We will make a plea to the Government to afford us that possibility. In this regard, I am optimistic, because I have also to testify that, in general, we have a very good working relationship with the Government of the Sudan. So we will say that there is a need for us to be in the Darfur area. We will go there with three officers, in addition to the officers of others. I spoke with Mr. Kellenberger of the ICRC to see if we could coordinate a little bit, so that our work is really complementary and effective. We will do that to improve the situation in Darfur.

I now return to the issue of Chad, which was the next question. We have been informed that the Janjaweed militia sometimes crosses the border. I have no information as to their having gone far enough to reach our refugee camps. It is exactly for that reason that we chose to have the camps 60 kilometres from the border; we have to work hard with non-governmental organizations to find water. It is very difficult, and these are small camps. We can accommodate perhaps 6,000 or 7,000 people, and then we have to move to the next place and expand the number of camps. That is what we are doing. Is there a food problem? Yes, but I would say it is not dramatic. The World Food Programme is doing its utmost to provide food. I would not qualify this as the key problem.

As to the question of the rainy season, we are working very hard. Our ambition was to have accommodated 60,000 or 65,000 people before the rainy season. I think we will have achieved that. There were more questions, but at this stage I leave the issue of Darfur in Sudan here.

I turn, now, to the others who had questions. I turn to the remarks and questions on behalf of Angola on the concern about security, with which I very much agree, since those were my two main themes in my briefing. I will say a few words on UNHCR's cooperation within the United Nations system. It is going well, I would s[illegible]

I gave examples here today of very close cooperation, in particular with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. It is the same with the Department of Political Affairs. I also said that we are part of the United Nations Development Group, as we work with Jan Egeland in the humanitarian group. By and large, this coordination is going well.

Of course, we have specific challenges. Regarding refugees, I described these problems; there are the others regarding internally displaced persons (IDPs). In short, we, as UNHCR, only work with IDPs selectively and when we are requested to do so by the system. Of course, we also need to have capacity. In this respect, the example of Darfur is an interesting one: we started with refugees only, and now we are asked whether we can do something in Darfur as well, because the United Nations system cannot deliver sufficiently without us. So I stretch my capacity and try to do something.

A more systematic problem regarding IDPs is in the area of returns. Our experience is that, when it comes to repatriation and areas of return, you can no longer divide the refugees and the IDPs, since they all become returnees to the same areas of return. We therefore need planned returns and planned reintegration, perhaps together with others. We try to practice, with the local population, having the refugees and the IDPs return. In this area, we are really in the middle of that issue. We accomplished this, I think pretty successfully, in Afghanistan. I reported on it in Sierra Leone, and we are doing it in Sri Lanka. Being involved with IDPs is thus not opposed to our type of work. On the contrary, we have to be involved with them — and effectively. Still, formally, I only do it when requested by the system. The Humanitarian Coordinator has to very formally ask UNHCR to take care of returning IDPs. He informs Mr. Egeland of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) of the plan and when he has done that, I say, fine, I am available.

Many mentioned financial support. That is constantly an uphill battle, as the President and others observed. Of course, it is sometimes very difficult for us that other branches receive assessed contributions, while we must go around time and again to ask timidly for voluntary contributions. I have no good answer with regard to that. I do not feel free to make a plea that is not in line with the original idea of the United Nations 50 years ago that we would be funded mainly by voluntary contributions.

I can say only two things here. First, at least the basic UNHCR staff — which, according to the Statute of 50 years ago, was supposed to be funded by the regular budget — should be funded by the regular budget, which is not the case. Secondly, countries with mature economies that consider it their responsibility to assist developing countries by spending resources on development assistance should be aware that the best way to do that is to spend a fair amount on solutions for uprooted people. That is not only humanitarian, in the interests of those people; it is also very much related to ensuring that there is more security, less crime and less human trafficking in this world.

Prioritizing those dimensions is a key aspect of sustainable development. And, as members are aware, since the International Conference on Financing for Development, held at Monterrey, there has been greater opportunity — at least on paper — to do more, to have a North-South partnership between the rich world and the still-developing world. My thesis is that that will be successful only if we can overcome the problem of being stand-offish — not that UNHCR can take care of that problem. UNHCR itself does not have one dollar; we must go to countries. So countries should plan sufficient room in their budgets not only for humanitarian emergencies, but also for permanent solutions. And here, things come together, as I have tried to explain.

I now turn to the remarks of the representative of France, who spoke about West Africa. Very briefly, I was there recently, and I made a plea; I was even a bit instrumental in the planning of the 20 May event on the Mano River countries. I asked them to put on their agenda cross-border demilitarization with regard to both persons and weapons. In order to do that, the three peacekeeping operations must learn from one another and work together. It is not only about individuals; it is also a joint effort to find the too-numerous weapons that are still there.

I also made a second point: that it might be good if the Mano River countries worked not only on that dimension, but also on what you might call the political dimension. To be very specific, if an African lives in Guinea for 10 years, he has the right of citizenship; he is considered a Guinean. In Sierra Leone and Liberia, one has the right of citizenship after

five years. It would be a blessing for Côte d'Ivoire — and therefore for the whole Mano River region — if the region's heads of State agreed that this was to be a systematic tradition, a rule of law, for the entire Mano River region. That would eliminate the risk of excluding people from participating in elections or from being elected.

Such an initiative taken by the Mano River region heads of State — if they wished to take it — would perhaps have more credibility than a request to do something from the international community or Brussels, not to mention Paris. It would be better if those countries themselves came to the conclusion that there was a very valuable tradition in this part of Africa of assimilating as normal citizens, after a relatively short period of time, Africans who have come to those countries.

The representative of France also asked a question about Darfur, in relation to the estimated numbers. We have said from the outset — I have to say, as a result of our experience interviewing people and seeing people — that there will probably be a caseload of approximately 100,000. Because I spoke with French diplomats there, I am aware that they thought there were fewer. We spoke about that: how was that possible? They said that they were nomads, who were going back and forth across the border. It is true that there is cohesion among the population. Therefore, although we said we could accommodate 60,000 out of the 100,000, we have probably accommodated all of them in theory, because we estimate that large numbers will cross the border to go to their families, so they will not really be refugees; they will be refugees only technically. But that was our idea.

There are now two changes. First, the border area itself is becoming increasingly insecure — including for the families living there — so there is probably a need to accommodate a larger percentage of the people who cross the border. Secondly, we do not rule out the possibility that more will come. That, of course, will depend on the effectiveness of the ceasefire — not so much the ceasefire itself, but the belief that it will end with human rights violations there. If you have a ceasefire but violations occur in practice on the ground and people think they will continue tomorrow, those people will use the final days, weeks or months to flee. So at this time, I must prepare for larger numbers.

The representative of Romania, among others, posed a question regarding the discrepancy in the figures between 1 million and 2 million. I do not know the answer; I was not there. We spoke with the refugees; we know it is awful. We said quite some time ago that the number was 1 million. I cannot rule out the possibility that it is much higher; I simply do not know. So I leave that for others to answer.

With regard to Kosovo, very briefly, we have had an enormous setback since the most recent events. We are continuing our work; it is exhausting. UNHCR is truly successful in the former Yugoslavia; the one exception is in Kosovo. I intend to speak with Mr. Holkeri about whether there is another way forward, because we really must think hard about where we go from here. So, to be brief, we are just doing our job. But the possibilities for people to return have been limited, and I do not see many prospects. We must look into this again. I do not think that rhetoric — the people should do this or that — works very well; perhaps we should opt for more practical steps forward and try to find a somewhat different approach. Perhaps I will be able to tell the Council more about that in the future.

I have already addressed the cross-border questions.

I turn now to the representative of Germany, who mentioned the figures in the millions provided by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. I am not denying that, but I cannot confirm it either.

I was asked to say a few more words about security, country by country. I will try to do that. I will start from the UNHCR perspective. UNHCR, starting with my predecessor, Mrs. Ogata, has improved security considerably. How have we done this? It is through the training of people — how they have to behave. Secondly, it is through technical communications. People always have to report every 20 minutes on where they are, and so on. Thirdly, we have trained people to communicate with all stakeholders in a given region, to come together and analyse situations. There may be misunderstandings or elements of which one may be very aware but which may not be controlled even by those who are locally empowered. We have very much improved that aspect.

I tend to say that we have become a very professional security organization. We are profoundly secure and operate securely. Where we are a bit concerned is the inter-agency dimension in this. It

started with the Office of the United Nations Security Coordinator (UNSECOORD). We are in favour of UNSECOORD. UNSECOORD brings the agencies together so that we have a United Nations country team on security. It is good when there are some UNSECOORD people on the ground. Then it goes well. When it goes wrong — if it becomes a system of only writing papers, reporting to Headquarters, and then Headquarters making philosophies of how one has to act in a country — then nothing can be won.

We made a study, together with the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, and we found that we — not only UNHCR — have a highly professional structure working in Afghanistan, involving the expertise of non-governmental organizations in structures. We have made a strong plea that others should learn from that, as we did in Sierra Leone and as we try to do in Liberia and other countries, and be very cautious about having a system in New York that thinks it must manage the situation. That might lead to less security, not only by drawing the wrong conclusions — such a judgement call can always happen — but by abdicating the responsibility. It would really be a step back if people should say: "Security is not my business. You have experts outside who provide security".

We have invested so much in this "operate secure" way that I stress we should not lose it. I can provide an example concerning Iraq. Today, when local staff in Iraq stay at home because of an analysis made totally outside Iraq, it is very difficult to relate to your local staff if they ask why. We cannot answer. These are indications that, as I say, we should take care over. Maybe we have become too obsessed by the Iraq experiences, which is why I made the remark that we will find out later that perhaps we went too far by supposing that people who do humanitarian work have no knowledge about security. I think my people have a lot of knowledge about security and they behave very properly. We had the critical reports after Baghdad on agencies that did not behave and had more people than was allowed, and so on. I checked with my own people. It was simply not true for UNHCR, and not only there. So I think the time has come to raise our voice a bit, to look to the good experience and to capitalize on it.

Having said all that, security is so important for me and such a priority that sufficient funding for security — we spend more on security these days — is very key. It is in the interests not only of our people, but also of our operations, that people continue to prioritize security. Do not misunderstand me. I do not like cowboy attitudes, but neither do I like to say: "Let us not operate at all". Therefore, I cited that example of the fortress, as I wish to explain a little bit further to the Council.

In response to the representative of Philippines, let me say that there is a system with regard to the security in camps. That started long before I came in, but we have improved considerably. I have mentioned one thing: refugee camps should be located at a distance from areas of conflict. That is one thing. Secondly, we must check on people and organize the camps. Very often, together with a Government, which we have invited, we have organizations in the refugee camps to rid them of arms. That is very important. Thirdly, we must not accept overly protected situations, because then you get a degradation; it becomes too attractive for young people to relate to armed groups. These are the systems we have put in place and we are trying, of course, to improve this further.

The representative of the United States asked about Darfur, and I am grateful for his generosity in mentioning it. I made my remarks and have not much to add. We have, of course, tried to prepare in Chad so that, if more come, we can accommodate more. I have to balance my capacity now: Do I have spare capacity in Chad or do additional things in Darfur? That is what I wanted to say on this.

As to the question posed by the representative of Algeria, I have to repeat what I said earlier, because I think it is the main point in relation not only to funding, but also to solutions. Today, making pleas to countries to respect the refugee law and not to push out refugees is not enough. We have to add the dimensions of burden-sharing, to understand that only the multilateral efforts of countries together can provide permanent solutions and reduce these irregular secondary flows and the risks of human trafficking and crime. This is, as it were, the new era. We have to do that. There is a word for it: we call it "Convention plus". That is also the key answer, I think, to the financial dimensions. Again, it is my job to try to explain to Governments that spending money on this is beyond a humanitarian gesture. It is indeed building a safer world. That is the basic point.

Therefore, we must also not allow ourselves to forget certain crises, and not only in terms of hunger or misery. Most of the time, I would say, if it is serious the media will report on it. It took some time, but the reports are now in on Darfur. So that is known, but what is a problem is when there some 100 000 Bhutanese who have been living in Nepal for more than a decade and people ask: "Are there refugees there?" They have never heard about them. There is a real risk, and it even becomes a political problem if we cannot find solutions for a forgotten refugee population. And that is only one example. We will try to work on that.

I come gladly to your questions, Mr. President. I have tried to answer the question on assessed contributions, on the one hand, and the humanitarian challenge, on the other. Then I was asked, regarding Afghanistan, to shed some light on the tripartite agreement. The answer is, yes, we tried to fill in the road map. That starts, of course, with respecting the tripartite agreement. This year, again, we have tried to bring home about 500,000 from Pakistan, but we want to prioritize somewhat — a little bit — the returns from the new camps, because we see security risks in the so-called new camps. Those are the camps near the border in the tribal areas. We see this as part of the tripartite agreement and we are in consultation with the Government on how to do that. It cannot be all forced in one day, but there has to be that ambition to do that.

And from there, we will look at other priorities. It is not a secret that the Government of Pakistan has an ambition to see substantial returns out of the cities as well. That is happening. For us, the process is a voluntary one of offering possibilities. There are, of course, certain priorities. In the cities, refugees are sometimes understood as a real problem, but in other situations, less so. That is part of the reality. I have already underlined that, from my perspective, the new camps are the top priority. But we will probably have to do both. Then we will achieve our numbers. Then we will see where to go from there.

In Iran, as well as in Pakistan, at a certain moment we will come to the Afghans who have now been living there for a long time and have become very productive. The reduction of assistance poses something of a test because individuals who do not receive assistance really have to make a choice about earning a living: do they go home or do they already have a job, an income, an activity — some even have businesses — in those countries? So, I can see that when we gradually come to the end of the tripartite agreement — and I have already put this on the table with both Governments — we have to establish to what extent Afghans living there are still a burden on the country and to what extent are we gradually starting to talk about temporary migrant workers. At some point we will recognize that, while respecting the tripartite agreement.

Finally, on the elections, as the High Commissioner for Refugees, I applaud when people with whom I am concerned can participate in elections. Therefore, there is motivation to participate in the process. As a United Nations person, I have to respect the specialized expertise of the structure of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA). The United Nations has put in place people, *et cetera*, for that purpose. I spoke about this frankly in Islamabad and said that I am positive about participating, but please respect the role, on the United Nations side, of the UNAMA structure organizing the elections. The UNHCR cannot be seen to be organizing the elections. It is a question of making ourselves available for assistance and promoting the process.

Another aspect is that when the elections are over, we are still there, with the Government, with many Afghans in Pakistan. We will probably have to do an analysis of the Afghans in question, not only in terms of numbers but more in terms of what we call profiling the people to see how to assist in the repatriation of those people over a number of years and to see to what extent they will be temporary migrant workers for a number of years. That is not something that can be done hastily before the elections. So, there are two phases in all this.

I have spoken too long, I fear. I could go on. Clearly, I like my job. But perhaps it is better that I stop here.

**The President**: I thank the High Commissioner for Refugees, Mr. Ruud Lubbers, for those comments and clarifications, and I thank him for responding to all the questions and comments that were made by members of the Council.

There are no further speakers inscribed on the list. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

*The meeting rose at 12.15 p.m.*